

Letters

Time Out Oct. 27 - Nov. 2 1972

Letters intended for publication should reach the office not later than first post on the Monday preceding the Thursday of publication. They should be addressed to: The Editor, Time Out, 374 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8BB.

They should, ideally, not be more than 150-200 words long so that a variety of topics may be raised. Letters marked * have been abbreviated for reasons of space.

The Trial of the Stoke Newington 8
Dear Sisters and Brothers,
Some of us attended Court No 1 at the Old Bailey during the prosecution case and were appalled to find there were so few in the visitors' gallery. Our indifference to these sisters and brothers on trial has the effect of colluding with the police pickets at the door to the gallery and with the conspiracy of silence in the national press. Whatever the token mouthings of support by the white left, their indifference is not an accident. It is a logical result of a point of view consistently expressed in the debate in the 'alternative' press about Angry Brigades and 'terrorism'. The hostility to the Brigades seemed then not only a betrayal of the accused to those on trial; to discuss this trial out of the context of the present stage of struggle in Britain is blindness to what the State is doing and hostility to what the class is doing. But some of us not in the left have discussed out of context. The context is this:
1) The violence (armed and unarmed) of the State against the Black community is no secret. The reason for this particular violence is not only racist relations and heavier exploitation which the police are organised to enforce. It is also because young Blacks especially employed and unemployed, have confronted this violence violently. Yet among the white left this is still treated as an aberration of an otherwise peaceful arm of the State, an 'injustice'. Witness the shocked charges of 'unfair' and 'foul' when the homes of International Socialists were raided, searched and robbed.
2) The strike of the mining community was won by violence and could be won in no other way. It is the classic story of defending picket lines against scabs and their protectors in blue. The key moment of the strike was when thousands of workers poured into the Saltley coke depot routing the police. They made the violence of the State impossible and the violence of the pickets unnecessary. This is because it was clear to the State that they came ready to be violent. We must remember that this was an attack on the running of power stations, and power stations are one of the military objectives of any insurrection. The IRA for example have understood the importance of that target—and of course groups of power workers when they attacked machinery during the work-to-rule in December 1970. All of these prior events paved the way for the mass event

at Saltley.

The white left continues to separate 'economic' from 'political' actions. The State makes no such separation. They deal with 'economic' strikes politically. They understand that defence, violent if necessary, of a picket line is political action. (The passage of the Industrial Relations Act confirms that all strikes are political). To separate economics from politics, to be blind to the political nature of working class struggle, is to call, in frustration, Angry



Smile when you see this man.

Brigades into existence. The appearance of Angry Brigades is a condemnation of what has passed for left politics in Britain.

Not only has the debate so far ignored the increasing tendency and necessity of the class to confront the state directly. It has assumed the guilt of those sisters and brothers who are now on trial. The courts exist, as we know, to dispose of people who are in one way or another dangerous to the State—dockers, miners, claimants, school strikers, Black youth—and to frighten others who might be. In this sense a little hatred of the ruling class goes a long way to seeing the truth: do we really believe what they say?

'Justice' after all is a power relation; juries who refuse to convict alleged IRA Members in Eire understand this. At the Mangrove trial which has set the pattern for both defence and prosecution in any overtly political trials (all trials are political; the State is never neutral), the Black community rallied in support and the whole course of that historic defence was shaped by this. The Black community have always understood the nature of the State and their organisations have always reflected this profound knowledge in their strategy and tactics. People standing by themselves cannot make a political defence. You can only make a political defence if you are certain that the people whom you are representing in the dock feel represented by you. We must follow

the lead of the Black community's support for the Mangrove 9.

The above barely opens the question. The implications are wide. Perhaps the greatest oppression from which we suffer is that we are conditioned against responding in a violent way to the violence done to us. This kind of ground is the context of our discussion. We lag behind the State in grasping the subversive implications of working class violence. Sir Roger Ormerod, a High Court judge, stated

heart failure when they see money, then that State is guilty of murder many times over. Perhaps we too in time will understand that the only crimes committed are the ones against our class. But there may not be a lot of time left.
(Three or four lines were cut from this letter on solicitor's advice - sorry Selma)

Tarts Lib

Dear Time Out,
As an all-round nice girl and moderately successful hooker, I protest most strongly at Philip Goodhand-Tait's inference in last week's TO, that a hooker is a depraved human being. I belong to the New Wave of intelligent, educated and wholesome whores. We are not sick, depraved or exploited.

We offer a desperately-needed service: a talented fuck, some (simulated) tenderness and conversation.

Less of these Sunday Times inspired judgements, Philip, and more original thought.

Regards

A Simons

Clapham and district Organiser,
Tarts Lib.

High Tension

Dear Time Out,
Is there any possibility of filing a formal charge against the Government, under the Trade Descriptions Act, for repeatedly applying the respectable English words 'highness' and 'majesty' to inflated puncompoops?
Yours truly
William Reimbold
18 Victor Road
Teddington, Middlesex

Three Bears

Dear Time Out,
Many points are arguable in John Gould's article 'The Three Bears' (Time Out No 139) but may I take issue with some of his panging shots? If the BBC tends to 'go for the same fifteen or twenty' writers, as Mr Gould avers, then he himself is amongst the fifteen or twenty. But of course his remark is a silly exaggeration. The current classified list of plays in various stages of production at the BBC contain the names of 75 playwrights under the 'Play For Today' banner alone.

As for the 'faithful group of readers who aren't necessarily very creative' or even that young and fresh in judgement, upon whose reports 'too much reliance is placed', may I as a 25-year-old reader (and writer—'creative' I hope) say that if all my enthusiastic reports were relied on, the BBC would transmit drama and nothing else. Sadly, it's a highly competitive world and it's gratifying that as many new writers do make it to the screen, considering how many scribblers, pro and amateur, would dearly love to. Fifteen or twenty indeed!

Yours faithfully

Stephen Gilbert
213a Uxbridge Rd W12

the distinction between State violence (war and corporal punishments, for example) and the mythologising of our violence by the ruling class which really reflects their 'anxiety about the declining respect for law and order' (Observer, Oct 1, front page). At the present moment their law and their order are on trial in Court No 1 at the Old Bailey.

If we show ourselves unwilling or unable to understand the level of struggle to which our class is moving, or to take any initiative to get there, then we must agree with Malcolm:—

'Sometimes I'm inclined to believe that many of our people are using the word 'revolution' loosely, without taking careful consideration of what this word actually means, and what its historic characteristics are... Revolution is bloody, revolution is hostile, revolution knows no compromise, revolution overturns and destroys everything that gets in its way'.

And revolutionaries defend sisters and brothers against the State.

In comradeship
Selma (James)
20 Staverton Rd,
NW2

PS. A counterfeiter now in jail in Italy threw money out of the window as arresting officers approached. An old-age pensioner was passing, saw the money floating in the air and died of a heart attack. The counterfeiter was charged with murder. His defence was an attack: if the State pays so little to old people that they get